

HEALTH AND WELLBEING AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

30th JUNE 2016

REPORT OF LEICESTER CITY CCG

MEDICINES AND SELF CARE

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform members of the Commission of the proposals regarding the promotion and education of self-care for Leicester city patients to maximise the benefits of existing resources. (prescribing budgets, freeing up GP appointments). The reports include low priority prescribing in particular: gluten free foods and paracetamol and other items for self-limiting illness.

Background

2. As the demand for NHS services and treatments increase, the gap between resources and funding over the next 5 years amounts to £30 billion nationally.
3. In order to achieve a sustainable model for the future, it is essential to prioritise our allocated budget for Prescribing to release significant savings for the NHS to re-invest in local healthcare systems. Also it is essential that patients are treated in the most appropriate setting of care ranging from self-care to emergency care. This means doing things where they should happen rather than where they could happen.
4. Equally, CCGs have a responsibility to provide a reasonable level of care for all patients but at the same time must work within the financial resources allocated to them. To address this, the LLR Medicines Optimisation Committee (LLRMOC) is proposing that certain treatments should not be routinely available on prescription, with two areas of focus in the initial stage: Paracetamol for self-limiting illness and gluten free food.

5. Paracetamol for self-limiting illness

- a. Consultations for minor ailments take up hours of a GP time each day with viral and hay fever being the most common ailments seen by GPs.
- b. Both of these conditions could be treated with over the counter medicines from a community pharmacy with advice from a pharmacist.
- c. Paracetamol is four times more expensive on prescription and costs on average 1-2p per tablet.
- d. There are many ailments where patients could be encouraged to care for themselves without a visit to their GP by accessing advice from a community pharmacist and purchasing medicines

6. Gluten free foods

- a. Gluten is found in wheat barley and rye

- b. Patients with coeliac disease need to maintain a gluten free diet and all patients in Leicestershire are offered dietetic counselling with a dietician. Coeliac UK membership also offers ongoing support for recipes, shopping, going on holiday etc.
- c. Currently to promote healthy lifestyles only health staples are allowed on prescriptions i.e. bread flour pizza bases and pasta
- d. Many patients manage their condition without gluten free food being provided on prescription
- e. In Leicester City 448 patients that request prescriptions for gluten free foods however there are 1072 patients recorded in the GP clinical systems as coeliac suggesting that over 50% of our population manage a gluten free diet without prescribed products. (data extracted from Systmone June 2016)
- f. A wide range of GF foods such as bread and pasta are now widely available to buy from supermarkets at a much lower cost than in previous years.
- g. Many CCGs across the country have completely disinvested in gluten free products on prescription.
- h. Patients could purchase gluten free food products that are readily available in supermarkets
- i. Patients with other dietary related conditions are not provided with food on prescription

Proposals/Options

Gluten free products for patients with coeliac disease

- 7. The proposal is that the three CCGs in Leicester, Leicestershire County and Rutland either completely or partially disinvest (allow flour and bread only) in the prescribing of gluten free products. The next step is to undertake a public survey through Health-watch to ascertain views to inform the decision making process.

Paracetamol and other products for self-limiting illnesses

- 8. The proposal is that the three CCGs in LLR will support GPs not to prescribe paracetamol and other products for self-limiting illnesses, such as viral infection. This would be supported with a campaign promoting self-care to patients.

Engagement

- 9. The next step is to undertake an engagement process using a public survey administered through HealthWatch to ascertain views around both gluten free products and paracetamol de-prescribing to inform the decision making process. The surveys will also ascertain views on stopping prescribing of an extended list of medicines for minor ailments that can be purchased by the patient.
- 10. Individual CCGs will also engage directly with Patient Participation Groups and work with GP practices to contact patients with coeliac disease to make them aware of the engagement and survey.
- 11. With respect to gluten free a stakeholder event has occurred including specialist charity representatives (Coeliac UK) dieticians and coeliac patients. With respect to Paracetamol and other products for self-limiting illnesses a stakeholder event will occur

Resource Implications

12. Across the LLR area, the cost of prescribing gluten free food products is approximately £680,000 some or all of which could be saved through a change in prescribing policy.
13. Across LLR the cost of paracetamol only products prescribed over the previous 12 months amounts to £1.5 million and the cost of paracetamol and codeine 8/500mg tablets £364,000. It is difficult to estimate how much of this is prescribed for short term use in self-limiting conditions as opposed to part of a pain management plan. However, a 20% reduction in prescribing would result in approximately £375,000 annual savings.

Conclusions

14. Members of the Commission are invited to note and comment on the two proposed changes currently being considered and the engagement process currently being undertaken.

Officer to Contact

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